

The Lakeview Lamp

"Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light to my path." - Psalm 119:105

February 19, 2006

"I Think God Would Want Me to Be Happy"

Author unknown

The man walked away from his marriage and his two children. A year later he found another woman who made him feel "alive." His first marriage had been a struggle from the beginning, and it had only gotten worse. He wasn't happy; neither was she. He had always viewed divorce as wrong, but his situation was unique. When questioned from a biblical perspective about his plans to marry again, he acknowledged that he had no right; but he said, "I think God would want me to be happy."

The girl was just sixteen. She came from a broken home. Her father had divorced her mother ten years previously. Although outgoing and popular at school, she still struggled with insecurities. She craved the attention the boys gave her. She knew fornication was wrong, but her situation was unique. She was lonely and being with "him" made her feel happy and secure. When questioned from a biblical perspective about her immoral intimacy, she acknowledged it wasn't right; but she said, "I think God would want me to be happy." She never imagined that she would get pregnant after just one time. She was scared. A baby would change all of her plans for the future. She became depressed. She went to the clinic and poured out her heart to a counselor. She couldn't consider abortion. God wouldn't like that. The counselor said, "I think God would want you to be happy."

The woman, divorced for sixteen years, had had a hard life. Her "ex" was remarried and happy. Her oldest daughter had left home five years ago; they had not spoken since the abortion. Her son had just graduated from high school. Neither of her children had ever obeyed the gospel. Bitterness and discouragement crept into her heart. The church she was part of was small and aging. She wasn't happy. Her friends from work invited her to their church. She went. She found people her own age in her own circumstances. They bonded. The small and aging church got smaller and aged some more. When the woman was approached about her exchange of the truth of God for a lie, she acknowledged that her new church did some things she was uncomfortable with; but she said, "I think God would want me to be happy."

The "I think God would want me to be happy" line has been used by many to justify their immorality and apostasy. The rationale is based on a self-centered definition of happiness and the assumption that God wants that kind of happiness for us. This rationalization ignores or is blind to all the unhappiness in its wake. The man divorces to be happy but leaves behind an unhappy family. The girl fornicates to be happy and increases her unhappiness. She aborts to be happy and deprives her child of life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness. The mother abandons her faith to be happy. All of this is done because people presume that God wants them to be happy.

Can you imagine? Eve observes the potential of the forbidden fruit to make her happy and reasons, "I know that God said, 'you shall not eat,' but I think God would want me to be happy" (**Genesis 3:6**). We ought to consider that God's boundaries are established for our happiness.

Ahab couldn't be happy unless he had a certain vineyard. "I know that God said, 'you shall not kill,' but I think God would want me to be happy." Did Ahab and Jezebel give any consideration to Naboth's happiness (**1 Kings 21:4-7**)?

Demas may have reasoned, "I know I should stay and work with Paul, but I think God would want me to be happy" (**2 Timothy 4:10**). This may hit a little close to home if our personal happiness is determined by how well things happen to be going for us in this present world. Many rationalize and excuse themselves from sacrificial spiritual service because, ultimately, we think God would want us to be happy!

In our affluence we have become obsessed with the importance of being happy. Solomon had been there and done that and concluded that it is vanity (**Ecclesiastes 2:1-11**). George Bernard Shaw quipped, "The secret of being miserable is to have leisure to bother about whether you are happy or not." Indeed, for many the quest for "happiness" has only brought greater misery.

People are looking for happiness in all the wrong places. Most recall Solomon's conclusion to "*Fear God and keep His commandments for this is the whole duty of man*" (**Ecclesiastes 12:13**) but miss that this conclusion is also the key to true and abiding happiness. "*Happy are the people whose God is Jehovah*" (**Psalms 144:15**) and whose hope is in Him (**Psalms 146:5**). Fearing Jehovah and walking in His ways bring happiness to everything from the food you eat to the family with whom you share it (**Psalms 128:1-4**). Blessing comes to those who revere, trust, and obey Jehovah God (**Proverbs 16:20; 28:14; 29:18**). It is not the pursuit of happiness that brings happiness but the pursuit of God's will.

The exemplary models of faith are not found pursuing happiness. What kind of example would Job have been if he had just given up to be happier? It is his endurance through extreme unhappiness that makes him noteworthy (**James 5:10-11**). What if Mary had decided she would be happier if she aborted her Child? Ultimately, Mary found her happiness in being able to serve the will of God (**Luke 1:38**).

If Jesus had decided He would have been happier in heaven we would be lost! We are called to imitate Jesus' selfless attitude (**Philippians 2:5-8**). When a man divorces his wife for personal happiness, he is not esteeming others better than himself (:3). When a woman aborts her child to achieve happiness, she is looking out for her own interests and not the interests of her baby (:4). These attitudes do not reflect the mind of Christ.

God has not called us to happiness as we define happiness. On the contrary, we have been called to suffer, if need be, for the cause of Christ (**1 Peter 2:19-21**). It is better to suffer for doing good than to do evil in a misguided effort to be happy (**3:17**). There is no value in suffering as an evildoer, yet if any suffers as a Christian there is no shame, but an occasion to rejoice and be glad (**4:12-16**).

Does God want you to be happy? Indeed he does! Yet the scriptures that inform you that God desires your eternal happiness also say that He hates divorce (**Malachi 2:16**) and that we must flee fornication (**1 Corinthians 6:18**) and that God hates hands that shed innocent blood (**Proverbs 6:17**), and that we must be faithful unto death (**Revelation 2:10**).

None of God's word can be ignored or compromised to secure the happiness that God offers. Yes, God wants us to be happy, and that is why we must hate what He hates and love what He loves. Jesus said, "*If you know these things, happy are you if you do them*" (**John 13:17**). If you do not have the happiness that God offers, then either you don't know the things of God or you aren't doing them.

Family News

Neil Barker, Sandy Heyboer's father, is not doing very well.

Mary Burnett was recently in Sumner Regional for a few days with heart problems. She has been back home and doing some better this past week.

There is a new report from **Arrigo Corazza** (Italy) in the back of the auditorium.

There is a new report from **Sandro Corazza** (Italy) in the back of the auditorium.

James Cox, James Hunt's BIL, was in the hospital but went home on Tuesday.

Metty Fain is in room 131 at the Terrace. This is where they have the more severe Alzheimer's patients. Obviously, she is not doing well.

Elmo Ferrell has some back trouble, but is doing well overall.

James and **Anita Fuller** solicit our prayers on their behalf for spiritual strength.

Robert Hunt, a member at Broadmoor (the father of Gary who is preaching here this morning), has colon cancer. He had successful surgery on two Mondays ago. He went home from the hospital this past Tuesday.

Sandra Hunt is not doing well. They should soon talk to a specialist regarding the results from some blood work.

Jean Jenkins, Jerry's mother, has non-Hodgkin Lymphoma. She is now receiving hospice care at home.

John Jenkins, Robert's father, has cancer. He is very weak and in some pain. He did have some relatively good days this past week. He is scheduled to receive another round of chemotherapy this week.

Grant and **Courtney Johnson** were both sick this past week but are now well.

Allen Malone left CA for Vietnam on Friday and is now in Vietnam. There is a new report from him in the back of the auditorium.

There is a new report from **Fred Newman** (Slovakia) in the back of the auditorium.

Laura Reed is suffering more than usual from arthritis pain.

Georgia Taylor continues to have many health problems.

Ame White continues to slowly improve.

Robert Wray has had a bad weekend. He has a doctor's appointment Tuesday.

Out of town, traveling, or visiting: **Connie Cobern** (Gatlinburg); **Hulls** (CA, come home tomorrow); **Cindi Malone** (CA)

Lakeview church of Christ

132 New Shackle Island Road

P.O. Box 514

Hendersonville TN 37077

Building: 615-824-1376

www.BibleSaints.com

Bible Call: 615-824-1310

Sunday:

Bible class.....9 am

Assembly.....10 am

Worship.....6 pm

Wednesday:

Bible study.....7 pm

Troy Nicholson

trojenn@intergate.com

"Rejoice always; pray without ceasing; in everything give thanks" (1 Thes 5:16-18).